

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 05865 141055Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----049650 141059Z /21
O 140942Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5097

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5865

EXDIS

FOR UNDER SECRETARY HABIB AND EA

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, KS
SUBJECT: STATE REPORTEDLY SET FOR RELEASE OF SOME
EMERGENCY MEASURES

REF: SEOUL 5577 (PR 050909Z JUL))

SUMMARY: STAGE IS APPARENTLY SET FOR RELEASE OF SOME, PERHAPS
BULK, OF PRISONERS CONVICTED OF EMERGENCY MEASURE VIOLATIONS
ON STEP BY STEP BASIS WITH RELEASE TO BEGIN SHORTLY AND
POSSIBLY TO END ON OR ABOUT AUGUST 15, KOREAN INDEPENDENCE DAY.
KIM TAE-CHUNG'S POSSIBLE RELEASE APPEARS STILL UNRESOLVED,
HOWEVER, ROKG AND OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP, NAMELY YI CHOL-SUNG,
ARE WORKING HARD TO KEEP RELEASE LOW KEY IN EFFORT TO AVOID A
"RETURN-THE-CONQUERING HERO" ATMOSPHERE AND POSSIBLE NEW
ANTI-GOVERNMENT OUTBREAKS. BOTH CONTINUE TO BE WEDDED TO
PRAGMATIC, GRADUAL APPROACH TO SETTLEMENT OF KOREAN INTERNAL
PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY

1. WE HAVE SEVERAL INDICATIONS THAT PRISONER RELEASE
IS IMMINENT AND MAY IN FACT ALREADY HAVE BEGUN. BOTH
SPEAKER CHUNG IL- KWON AND OPPOSITION LEADER YI CHOL-SUNG
HAVE TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT MOST OF EMERGENCY MEASURES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SEOUL 05865 141055Z

PRISONERS WOULD BE RELEASED BEFORE AUGUST 15, ANNIVERSARY
OF KOREAN INDEPENDENCE. OTHER SOURCES AGREE AND ONE
OR TWO INDICATE THAT ROKG MAY HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO RELEASE
SOME STUDENTS ALTHOUGH THIS IS STILL UNCONFIRMED. SPECIFICALLY,
SPEAKER ONE SAID RELEASES BEGUN AND NDP SOURCES HAS BEEN QUOTED
AS SAYING HE HAS SEEN AT LEAST ONE EMERGENCY MEASURE 9 VIOLATOR
ON STREET.

2. ACCORDING TO BLUE HOUSE PRESS CORPS SOURCE, GOVERNMENT HAS INFORMALLY BRIEFED PRESS CORPS THERE TO EXPECT "STEP BY STEP" RELEASE OF MYONGDONG AND OTHER PRISONERS CONVICTED OF EMERGENCY MEASURES VIOLATIONS TO BEGIN "SHORTLY". HE SAID NO "FORMAL REPENTENCE" STATEMENTS WOULD BE REQUIRED ALTHOUGH THOSE RELEASED WOULD BE EXPECTED TO REFRAIN FROM OVERT POLITICAL CONTACTS AND STATEMENTS WHICH WOULD TEND TO CALL ATTENTION TO THEMSELVES OR THEIR PREVIOUS DIFFICULTIES. "IN OTHER WORDS, THEY SHOULD NOT IMMEDIATELY TELEPHONE SOME FOREIGN JOURNALIST." SENTENCES WILL BE "SUSPENDED" AS OPPOSED TO AMNESTY GIVEN, TO ALLOW ROKG FLEXIBILITY TO WITHDRAW PRIVILEGES OF THIS SUSPENSION SHOULD RELEASED PRISONERS BREAK TACIT CONDITIONS OF RELEASE.

3. BOTH SPEAKER AND BLUE HOUSE SOURCE AS WELL AS NDP'S YI CHOL-SUNG, INDICATE THAT KIM TAE-CHUNG RELEASE REMAINS UNRESOLVED PROBLEM FOR ROKG SINCE GOVERNMENT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER KIM WOULD ACCEPT THESE TERMS. ACCORDING TO HIS LAWYERS, KIM CONTINUES TO RESIST ANY COMPROMISE EFFORTS.

4. APART FROM NEWS ABOUT POSSIBLE RELEASE, GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION LEADER CONTINUE EFFORTS TO HEAD OFF ANY ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS. BLUE HOUSE OFFICIAL HAS POINTEDLY STATED RELEASES WILL BE MADE GRADUALLY SO AS TO AVOID REPLAY OF ANTI-VOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATION THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 05865 141055Z

OCCURRED AT TIME EMERGENCY MEASURE PRISONER RELEASE IN EARLY 1975. NDP CHAIRMAN YI HAS BEEN BUSY IN PAST THREE DAYS SEEING FORMER PRESIDENT YUN PO-SUN, CARDINAL KIM, ANGLICAN BISHOP PAUL LEE AND OTHERS IN APPARENT MOVE TO DEVELOP SUPPORT AMONG KEY OPPOSITION FIGURES FOR HIS "MIDDLE OF ROAD" POLCY OF NON-CONFRONTATION WITH GOVERNMENT. YI NOTED TO AMBASSADOR PRIVATELY THAT EVEN YUN PO-SU HAD PRAISED HIM FOR HIS EFFORTS IN PROMOTING ASSEMBLY'S ACTIONS REGARDING PRISONERS AND BISHOP LEE ENDORSED HIS APPROACH. YI'S INSISTENCE ON A MODERATION POLICY APPEARS TO MESH NEATLY WITH ROKG'S EXPECTED MOVES TO SET EVENTUAL RELEASE OF PRISONERS IN DELIBERATE, UNHURRIED MANNER.

5. WHILE ACCORDING ALL SOURCES ROKG AND YI CHOL-SUNG JOINT EFFORTS ARE PROCEEDING VERY WELL, EXCEPT FOR KEY PROBLEM WITH HOW TO DEAL WITH KIM TAE-CHUNG, GOVERNMENT FACES TWO ADDITIONAL CONCERNS. FIRST IS CLEAR INDICATION FROM STRONG ANTI-GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION FIGURES THAT MERE RELEASE OF PRISONERS NOT ENOUGH; REPEAL OF EMERGENCY MEASURE NO. 9 AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM ALSO REQUIRED. ACCORDING YI CHOL-SUNG, YUN PO-SUN AMONG OTHERS IS PUSHING FOR THIS. KIM YONG-SAM AND OTHER LESS RECONCILABLE NDP

FIGURES TEND TO DERIDE ROKG/YI CHO-SUN EFFORTS AND SEE NO CHANCE FOR ANY "SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATION" IN EMERGENCY MEASURES. IN RESPONSE TO THIS YI CHOL-SUNG AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE ENCOURAGING "GO SLOW," ONE STEP AT A TIME APPROACH.

6. SECOND PROBLEM IS OBVIOUS GOVERNMENT CONCERN THAT PRISONER RELEASE WILL BE DEPICTED AS RESPONSE TO USG PRESSURES. IN EXTENSIVE AND RATHER WILD PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S JUST COMPLETED VISIT TO SEOUL, MOST REPEATED SPECULATION IS THAT UNDER SECRETARY BROUGHT MESSAGE TO PAK GOVERNMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. IN OBVIOUS EFFORT TO NIP THIS CONJECTURE IN THE BUD, BLUE HOUSE SPOKESMAN TOLD PRESS CORPS ON BACKGROUND THAT USG CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SEOUL 05865 141055Z

HAD NO HUMAN RIGHTS MESSAGE TO ROKG "THIS TIME." IN ITS OWN COMMENTS EMBASSY IS EMPHASIZING THE ANNOUNCED PURPOSE OF UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S VISIT, I.E. TO CONCULT WITH AMBASSADOR AND GENERAL VESSEY, AND IS DOING NOTHING TO CONTRADICT BLUE HOUSE PRESS GUIDANCE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS NOT DISCUSSED DURING COURTESY CALLS ON ROKG LEADERS.

7. COMMENT: WITH GOVERNMENT/OPPOSITION COORDINATED EFFORTS APPARENTLY PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY, PROSPECTS FOR PRISONER RELEASE CLEARLY BETTER THAN AT ANY TIME. IT ALSO CLEAR, HOWEVER, PROCESS IS AT DELICATE STAGE AND THAT ANY SUGGESTION THAT IT OCCURRING IN RESPONSE U.S. PRESSURE COULD JEOPARDIZE OUTCOME. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND CONTINUED GREATEST CARE BE TAKEN TO AVOID SUCH AN IMPLICATION IN PUBLICLY COMMENTING ON THIS ISSUE.
SNEIDER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SEOUL05865
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770250-0944
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770757/aaaabxia.tel
Line Count: 152
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1b7e566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 SEOUL 5577
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1860767
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STATE REPORTEDLY SET FOR RELEASE OF SOME EMERGENCY MEASURES
TAGS: PINS, PINT, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbs://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1b7e566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009